



South Carolina Volunteer Strategic Assistance Fire Equipment Program

V-SAFE Panel Meeting Minutes Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 2 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome: Chairman Tres Atkinson

The meeting was posted and advertised pursuant to all South Carolina laws, rules, and regulations. Chairman Atkinson called the conference call to order at 2:03 p.m.

The following panel members were present (see below) on the phone. In person were LLR employees Adam Russell (advice attorney), George Stapleton, Abigail Stevens, and Susan Duncan. A quorum was present.

II. Introduction and Roll Call of Members

V-SAFE Panel Members									
Jonathan Jones	X	Tres Atkinson	X	Barry McRoy	X	Tony Dicks	X	Tommy Keaton	A
Bill Dunlap	X	Steve Arsenault	P	Randy Swinton	P	Glenn Poole	X	Vacant	

P: Via Phone X: Present A: Absent

III. Approval of Agenda and Previous Minutes (12.18.2018)

Bill Dunlap made a motion to approve the agenda and the December 18, 2018, meeting minutes. Tony Dicks seconded. The motion carried unanimously without discussion.

IV. Finance Updates

George Stapleton provided a handout indicating the year-end balance is \$886,838.34.

V. Update on Previous Grant Cycle Awards

Susan Duncan provided an update on the previous grant recipients. Out of the 31 fire departments to receive grant funding, 19 (or 56 percent) have submitted a final report. The remaining 14 departments have been sent email reminders. Riverside Volunteer Fire chose not to submit an amendment and forwarded a refund check in the amount of \$20.01. The money will be returned to the VSAFE fund.

VI. Discussion of Potential Grant Application Changes

Jonathan Jones discussed the current grant application. The LAC recommendations include statutory suggestions. SC Code 23-9-25 states the panelists shall evaluate and score the proposed project's clarity, including:

- The project's budget detail
 - o Including administrative or indirect costs, as part of the cost-benefit review.
 - Cost-benefit may be demonstrated by describing how the grant will enhance a regional approach, or otherwise benefit other organizations in the region; implement interoperable communications' capabilities with other organizations;

allow first responder organizations to respond to all hazards, including seismic, atmospheric, technological, chemical, etc.

- The organization's financial need.
- The benefits that would result from an award relative to the cost.
- The extent to which the grant would enhance daily operations or how the grant will positively impact an organization's ability to protect life and property.

Chief Jones recommended revising the application (projective narrative section) and the panel's evaluation instrument (formula based assessment for financial need) to comply with the following LAC recommendations (#71 and #72):

#71. The Division of Fire and Life Safety should revise the V-SAFE grant application to itemize statutorily-mandated grant funding priorities in separate fields to ensure an applicant's response for each statutory element.

#72. The Division of Fire and Life Safety should revise the V-SAFE evaluation instrument to mirror the grant application, each of which should reflect statutorily-mandated grant funding priorities.

Jonathan Jones discussed amending the current grant application to request the number of fire stations, the size of the coverage area (square miles), and to break down the project narrative section into four text boxes (Budget detail, Cost-Benefit Analysis, Financial Need, and effect on Daily Operations). Barry McRoy made the motion and Glenn Poole seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Tony Dicks made a motion to limit the number of characters in the narrative box to mirror the AFG grant application. Bill Dunlap seconded. The motion carried unanimously without discussion.

Barry McRoy asked if the auto-populated NFIRS data could be more specific to include a breakdown of the types of fires.

The Region 3 seat remains vacant.

VII. Timeline for Next Grant Cycle

Jonathan Jones recommended advertising the opening of the grant process for two weeks starting April 1. As of Monday, April 15, each fire chief would be able to complete and submit the application within a 30 day time period (close May 15, 2019). The Panel would have 30 days to review (Sunday, June 15, 2019) each application. The Panel would meet between June 15-30, 2019, (perhaps during the SC Fire-Rescue Conference) to vote on recipients. Award announcement would take place after Monday, July 1, 2019.

Barry McRoy made the motion to accept the suggested timeline. Glenn Poole seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

Jonathan Jones reminded the Panel is it required, by statute, to submit a progress report to the Governor's Office, and the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance chairmen. Our self-imposed due date is April 15, 2019.

There are several potential changes to the law introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate to re-write SC Code of Laws 23-9 (where VSAFE is contained). Amended language will give the Panel the autonomy to set funding priorities and allow the consideration of grant amendments other than community risk reduction related activities. These changes would closely mirror the AFG grant process.

The S.C. Firefighters' Association will be introducing a bill regarding the VSAFE funding source to make the program more viable.

S.C. Firefighters' Legislative Day is Tuesday, March 19, 2019.

The updating of any grant instructions will be at the direction of OSFM staff.

XI. Next Meeting and Adjournment

A motion was made by Glenn Poole to adjourn the meeting. Tony Dicks seconded. The motion carried unanimously without discussion. The next meeting was not scheduled and is at the call of the chair – perhaps during the 2019 Fire Rescue Conference in June 2019. The meeting adjourned at 3:03 p.m.